

Developmental Disabilities Council
Policy & Law Committee Minutes
February 2, 2018
Friendly's, Middletown, De.
9:30 a.m.

Members Present: Rick Kosmalski, Chair, Daniese McMullin-Powell, Bill Powell, Terri Hancharick, Brigitte Hancharick

Members Absent: Michael Harris, Nancy Lemus, Alvin Emory, Deb McCann

Staff: Pat Maichle

Guests:

- I. Position Statements
 1. Discussion of Future Statement
 2. Karen Gallagher's proposition is to develop a letter writing campaign to get health providers to show respect for the wishes of people with disabilities and to listen to the person who is the patient. The Committee would like to invite Karen to the next scheduled meeting to talk about this issue to bring clarity to her request. Pat will make the invitation to Karen.
- II. Strategic Planning – Review of Goals/objectives
 1. Partners as Trainers – A group was trained in October to form a pool of Partners Graduates who can be presenters at Partners in the next few year.
Train the Trainer Update:

The training event was held on October 6th, 2017 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM at DDDS Fox Run in Bear. Karen Bell, the Project Coordinator for the 2018 PIP program, led the training.

Four past PIP grads attended: Diann Jones, Melissa Stansell, Nancy Lemus and Laura Greene. All stated that the training was helpful. Karen Bell spoke with each participant individually to see which sessions of the 2018 PIP program they would like to speak. Each individual who attended the training signed up for at least one session.

Since the objective as written in the state plan calls for 10 individuals to be trained over the course of the five-year state plan at a rate of two individuals trained per year, we are actually a bit ahead of target on this objective.

2. Self-Advocacy - Asperger's Alliance Update (from Asperger's Alliance Director Rebecca Clark):

- We have completed 20 assessments thus far with our teenagers and young adults to acquire a baseline of their knowledge of independent living skills, social development and executive functioning skills. Our goal is to have a collection of 40 evaluations done by December to have as a baseline, which we will reevaluate in June after we begin our new life skills and social development curriculum in January.

- We have resumed our Asperger's and Anxiety and Art in Me sessions and are currently in discussions with Exceptional Care for Children to partner with their organization to allow our participants to share their art skills and develop employment readiness and social skills in another environment.

-We are in the process of developing our housing model and have identified our target stakeholders and corporate sponsors for our 5k, which we have designated proceeds to help fund. Our goal is to develop the first housing program in the State of Delaware specifically designed to meet the needs of individuals with Asperger's and Autism Spectrum Disorder's who have the ability to live independently by creating a cohousing model that would support both their social and activity of daily living support needs. Cohousing is a system that is gaining recognition and studies have proven success in European countries at reducing rates of anxiety and depression. Individuals have their own living areas, but there are common areas that promote socialization and encourage individuals to depend on one another for support. Our board has unanimously voted to name the project Maria's House after a dear friend and former board member of Asperger's Alliance who recently passed away from cancer.

-We have taken out advertising in the New Castle Women's Journal and in addition to an increase in referral numbers. We have already seen several networking opportunities as a result. We have several meetings coming up in the next couple of weeks with organizations interested in discussing possible partnership opportunities.

3. Jr. Partners – The 2017 class ended in June. The participants and families were very satisfied with the class and presentations. All of the students felt that this training was beneficial to them.
4. Delaware People First, Inc. has decided to go back to being a social club rather than advocates for people with developmental/intellectual disabilities.

- III. Legislative Update – Joint Finance Committee has begun hearings and that process will continue through the month of February. DHSS has hearings on the 20th – 22nd all day. Advocates are encouraged to communicate with the JFC members in some fashion to make them aware of the needs of people with disabilities.

The Legislative Policy Agenda was provided to all of the LIFE Conference attendees in January. Daniese also talked about the federal MFP S. 2227 bill that has been introduced. Yesterday was national Call-In Day on this issue. The Disability Integration Act is also introduced and Congresswoman Lisa Blunt-Rochester has signed on as a sponsor. We should be able to discuss these with our Congressional representatives in Washington while at the Policy Seminar in April. Appointments will be made with all 3 of our folks in D.C. for all of our Council Members to be able to meet while we are there.

Terri will schedule the meeting with Senator Coons. We will ask Nancy Lemus to schedule with Congresswoman Lisa Blunt-Rochester. Stefanie can schedule with Senator Carper for us while we are in D.C. We will talk about a priorities list at our next meeting.

- IV. Budget – Where are we? We don't know about Congress, at this point. The state's budget is not bad this year. The Governor has priorities for the money that has not been appropriated, yet.
- V. Other Business From the Group – A discussion about the shock therapy that is practiced at the Judge Rotenberg Center. Delaware has won the appealed case that started in 2015 for the two people from DE who receive services at the Center. This is a ruling with the state Medicaid Fraud unit and was heard in Superior Court in the state of Delaware.

H.B. #296 has been introduced in the House to enhance the ABLE Accounts. This will need to go to the Appropriations Committee before moving forward in the Legislature.

Delaware's DEPendable site is now open and the Treasurer's Office is working hard to make this accessible for anyone to use. The Treasurer presented this information at this year's LIFE Conference.

- VI. Next Meeting Date – The next meeting is scheduled for March 9th at 9:30 a.m. at Friendly's in Middletown.
- VII. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.